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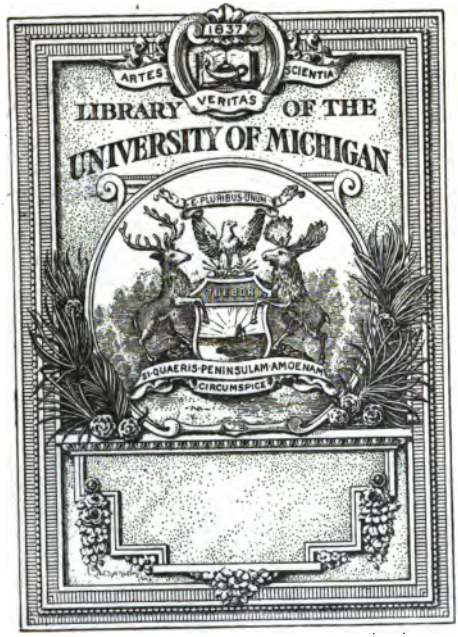

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WANTED—
A THEOLOGY

BY
SAMUEL T. CARTER, D.D.

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
NEW YORK AND LONDON
1908

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[*Printed in the United States of America*]

Published May, 1908

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Dedication

TO MY DEAR WIFE, NOW WITH GOD, WHOSE
LIFE OF PATIENT, GENTLE GOODNESS AND
COMPLETE SELF-SACRIFICE WAS A
BEAUTIFUL REVELATION OF
THE INFINITE LOVE

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Author's Note

I HAVE appealed to my Presbytery, to the Synod of New York, and to the General Assembly against the further acceptance of the scholastic theology. The appeal has had a wide publication, but there has been no ecclesiastical action upon it. It seems right to take a further step, and to suggest what is now believed by very many, and what might, with modifications, be substituted for an old and outworn creed that does not commend itself to the convictions of a large number, and is repellent to a great many of the most thoughtful and earnest people. This is the purpose of the following treatise.

EAST ORANGE, N. J.

Rel. Mus. 1-9-40

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I

Wanted—A Theology

THE world wants to-day more than anything else a new theology. We call it a new theology in distinction from the old that has been in vogue for centuries in Christendom. But in fact the new theology wanted is the oldest theology of all, the theology of the mind and heart of God—the theology that fell so brightly and beautifully from the lips of the Lord Jesus—the theology of all the saints and sages of all the world. But it is a new theology in distinction from the received theology, the theology of the monks, the theology of the ordinary pulpit and convention of to-day, which has gone for long under the arrogant name of "orthodoxy." This old theology is one of the saddest, darkest, cruelest products of the human mind in all the ages.

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It is perversely and ingeniously wrong, and the minds of intelligent men and women have been long distrest by hearing it, being assured that it is "the truth," and the truth upon the most seriously important matters, and by being as continually outraged in all their best thoughts and feelings by it.

We step out under the sublime vault of heaven and see moon and stars riding in their majesty above us. Taught by modern astronomy we have learned that these little points of light are great suns like our own blazing sun, many of them vastly greater than our own. With little doubt each one of them is leading on a grand array of satellites as our own sun is doing. There are millions of these radiant suns and they are moving with inconceivable swiftness through the realms of space, and yét they keep their great courses and not one dashes against another. And the greatness of their size, of their numbers, and of the boundless realm of space through

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which they move is something hardly expressible in human language, goes beyond all our thought or searching, the wildest fancy can not realize it. Then we feel that all this demands the fullest, highest thought and will and goodness for its production and maintenance, demands in the most absolute way, just *God.*

> The spacious firmament on high
> And all the blue, ethereal sky,
> The spangled heavens, a shining frame,
> Their great original proclaim.
> In reason's ear they all rejoice
> And utter forth a glorious voice,
> Forever singing as they shine,
> "The hand that made us is divine."

Laplace says, "There are two hundred millions of millions chances against one that the universe is the result of design and not of chance." And Herbert Spencer says, "One truth must ever grow clearer and clearer, the truth that there is an inscrutable existence everywhere manifested. Amid mysteries that become more mysterious the more we think of them, there will re-

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main one absolute certainty that we are ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed."

Yes; all this is most positive, absolute, final—it means God. And so is it with all God's revelations, they speak Himself.

Now let us step out into the world of the old theology and give a quick sketch of its teachings. There is a great God, Ruler of all. He has made a marvelous creature in his own image, Man. The first great act of man is to *fall* so as to become utterly corrupt, totally depraved, prone to all evil and averse to all good. The great God is furiously angry with this sinful man; as Jonathan Edwards says, he holds him above hell as you would hold a venomous spider over your fire. His son, Jesus Christ, soothes and placates this fierce wrath of Jehovah by his death upon the cross. The vast mass and sum of men in the past have gone down to the abyss of hell, a lake of fire burning with brimstone; the heathen in

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one great body have been consigned there, and there lost men shall abide forever and ever, bearing the most dreadful tortures and strengthened by God to be able to endure them. Now I ask, do we have the same feeling here as when we look up to the heavens and learn the lessons of astronomy? Does the old theology demand the great, good God? Do we feel that these two things have the same glorious author? By no means. We feel that the one who has done so magnificently in the way of worlds seems to have utterly failed in the far higher work of man. The one suggests glory and triumph, the other shame and weakness and failure.

No one who reads over a brief statement of the old theology is sufficiently imprest with its awful horror for the reason that we have been familiarized with many of its terrors. In fact so thoroughly has it been drilled into the generations from their childhood that they have simply taken it as a thing of course. And a very different rea-

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son has led the great company of Christian people in these later days to endure the old theology, namely this: that its worst horrors have been of late years concealed—it is probably never preached to-day in its fullest absurdity. If it were preached to-day as it was one hundred years ago, it would be flung out of pulpit and church with an outbreak of popular indignation. Let any one sit down and try to realize to himself the dreadful features of this theology, a whole race, and a very wonderful race, utterly lost, curst, damned by God, and an endless torment endured to-day by countless millions of our fellow men on the burning marl of hell, and the result must be either quick rejection or insanity.

I am persuaded that many of my readers think that I use too strong language on this subject. That is not my difficulty, rather it is of the opposite sort, that the English language was not constructed with any reference to the old theology and has not expletives enough or strong enough

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to set forth its cruelty. Perhaps Volapük or Esperanto may invent such; then I shall be very glad to use them. In the mean time more vigorous adjectives are called for than any I can light upon, and I have to be content to use feebly what I have at hand.

I want it to be well understood that I do not write the present treatise to say that the old theology has room for improvement, is not well adapted to the present time and ought to be revised and corrected, and then adopted at ordinations and councils. My purpose is very different from this; it is to express my utter abhorrence for the whole system as a system, to declare that in the light of the present day it is simply abominable, something that neither God nor man can bear any longer. It has been a dreadful burden for ages, it is an unendurable burden for this time, and should be utterly swept away with the besom of the hot indignation of the whole mass of the people.

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But the strong language used as to the theology does not at all apply to the worthy people who accept it. They are of the excellent of the earth, and having received these dreadful teachings from parents and pastors they naturally accept them on their authority. It will be the highest kindness to deliver them, but they can not see it in that light. Like the Prisoner of Chillon:

> "My very chains and I grew friends.
> So much a long communion tends
> To make us what we are; even I
> Regained my freedom with a sigh."

By the general spread of light, the growth of milder ways of thinking and doing, and by the sheer terror of the old theology itself, a vast company of intelligent people have been led to throw off this most distressing bondage. But certain seminaries seem hardly to have heard that there is any new theology, and there is quite a large company of ministers trained in such institutions who still maintain this dreadful and antiquated

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system. The brighter men and the younger men want to say as little about the old theology as may be. They are distrest to have to declare their acceptance of the Westminster Confession, and fall back upon a large variety of reasons why their solemn "Yes" in ordination really means "No." I think if they tried the same treatment with an oath in the law courts that they use with the most solemn affirmation of ordination they would come to grief very speedily.

In passing let me say that there is one peculiarly objectionable person, who has quite too much intelligence to accept the old theology, to whom it is simply unthinkable, who yet goes on to show that it may all be explained in some mystic, occult, or poetic way. The fact is that there is nothing mystic, occult, or poetic in the old theology; it is bare, hard, cold talk; it is plain and understandable and, to us in this day, monstrous. The men who made this theology put in plain terms just their faith. They meant what

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they said and said what they meant, and the men who are drawing out its mystic, hidden meaning had better be otherwise engaged. And we must all of us lay to our souls this solemn consideration, that there is a great deal of bread and butter, and there are many fine pulpits and professors' chairs, back of the old theology, and this should make us very careful lest we be tempted not to speak our minds about its dreadful character.

I must put in a plea here against the common sneers at theology and scoffs at doctrine. These have come from the false doctrines and miserable theology that we have had. Theology will always remain the queen of sciences. We need a good, preachable theology more than anything. This despising of theology has made preaching the contemptible thing it often is. All overmastering power has gone from it and never will come back till the preachers have found the true theology, based on the love of God and the brotherhood of man. A true theology has al-

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ways been a tremendous force and in every age has bowed the hearts of men before it. This beggarly remnant of rags and tatters that we have had, will never move a soul of man, much less save it.

A word may be allowed here on a kindred subject, the prevalent custom in certain theological seminaries of drawing students on to the acceptance of a theological system which outrages all modern thinking. Their men have to get into the ministry and there must be a little hocus-pocus to get them in, in spite of their inward revolting. In the course of affairs the entire departure from absolute integrity is lost sight of. It is a triumph of brain over commonest morals. I pray the seminaries to look into this matter. If they would train their young men, when asked at ordination if they accepted the Westminster Confession, to answer bravely, "No, we do not," it would clear the whole atmosphere, and help the morality of the Continent; more especially as the

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Church in general is saying, "No, we do not," with more and more emphasis. God is always teaching us theology. It would be a misfortune for the theological seminaries to be the last to learn it.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in the year 1907 struggled with the distressing question of subscribing to the Westminster Confession, and instead of simply saying that they do not consider it a satisfactory presentation of the character of God or of the great truths of religion, they have adopted an amended formula: "I hereby subscribe to the Confession of Faith, the public and avowed Confession of the Church approved by former Assemblies as most agreeable to the Word of God and ratified by Parliament in the year 1690, declaring that I believe the Reformed Faith therein set forth. To that, will I adhere." The simple fact remains that any statement of religion of the Parliament of 1690 would be objectionable, if not revolting, to Chris-

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tian people now, and that the Westminster Confession is both objectionable and revolting, and it would be a hundred times better to say so. It is thought that there is quite a moral twist in finance and in politics at present. Would it be strange if it could be traced back to the twist in the pulpit, the seminary, and the Church in general? It is very difficult to receive straight morality from a crooked man.

Having thus far very briefly treated some of the unpleasant aspects of the old theology, we have before us the delightful and even thrilling consideration of what the New Theology is—how beautiful and glad and divine. I trust I shall not be judged foolish enough to think that I can give in this little treatise the full coming theology; for I believe that that theology is only in the heart of God himself, that his capacious mind alone can contain it, that in order fully to know it we should have to be God ourselves. But I can at least do two things: first show how far away it is

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from the old theology, and second, as Matthew Arnold says, throw out a few thoughts at it that may be helpful to plain people. The suggestions I have to offer are only hints relating to a new Theology that is fast coming to be received.

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II

God

THE new theology will have as its source and center the infinite love of God. "God is love" is the grandest sentence in the language. It is like God himself in its simplicity and sublimity; three words, one of two letters, one of three, and one of four, but he who knows fully this truth knows every best thing and enters into the fulness of life. This explains everything. This light shines into all darkness and brilliantly. Close your books; leave your University; learn this and be blest forever. The book that does not contain this, the University that is not based on this, write on them "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

The new theology will give itself full swing in the declaration of God's love. It is true no lan-

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guage can set this love forth, no illustration or comparison can fully reveal it. The utmost fulness of mother's love is only a little touch of it, the great rapture of lover's love does not approach it. Nothing in heaven or earth or under the earth can fully declare the love of God. The whole creation is an effort to set it forth, but the sum of things seen and known can not do it completely. God only knows the love of God, and even HE can not tell it in its fulness. These thoughts are most rapturous. That an infinite Being controls all things, and that the center of his life is love is absolutely final. Irresistible power moves infinite love, and infinite love guides irresistible power to a result that transcends all human thinking. The soul that has grasped this combination of ideas, rests. There is nothing further to be sought or hoped for, rather everything worth seeking or hoping for is contained in this. The old theology vanishes like a nightmare before this thought.

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But, it is replied, the old theology taught that God is love. But the old theology said God is love and then went on to say unspeakably dreadful things about God. The old theology said God is love, but it taught the doctrine of Reprobation, and how many different kinds of a liar the doctrine of Reprobation makes the dear God to be! The old theology preached God is love in the morning, and the endless torment of Socrates and Plato in the afternoon. If Adam had tried to think the worst possible thought and had kept trying till the present moment, he could not have lighted on a worse thought than that God would send an infant to endless torment in the flames of hell. Yet the old theologians preached sermons asserting that. If they were to do it today the women of the congregation would put them out on the curbstone with their hats well crusht over their eyes.

There is a fine expression of the old régime in France, "Noblesse oblige." It means that no-

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bility itself compels. If a man is a noble he must be superior to the rest; he must be true; he must be gentle and courteous; he must be manly and chivalrous; he must be altogether pure and noble. The reign of terror came to France because the nobility completely forgot "Noblesse oblige," because they were cruel, tyrannous, deadly in their selfishness.

But if nobility compels, divinity compels still more. Unquestionably the great God acknowledges absolutely this "Noblesse oblige." God, because he is God, must be the most pure and the most patient, the most gentle and the most strong, the most long-suffering and the most helpful, of all beings. The last thing that it is possible for God to do is one mean thing, because it is utterly unworthy of himself, and repugnant to his nature. St. Francis says, "God is always courteous." But here have we been under the old theology ascribing the most atrocious things to God. It is mercifully impossible

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for us to enter into his thought about this matter. God is infinitely patient, but can an infinite patience endure this? The shining of the sun and the flashing of the dew show God's goodness, but not like this, that God did not take this man preaching that God would damn an infant and fling him where he would never be found again by his mourning friends.

It is a common reproach cast up against the teaching that God is love that it means God is too good to punish. It means nothing of the sort. Love is the thing that punishes wisely; it will not let any wrong be done without opposition and chastisement. But it will certainly never punish after the stupid, blundering way of the old theology, a way against which conscience revolts and all fine feeling bitterly protests. There is nothing on earth more admirable and wonderful than God's punishment. Sit down by Pharaoh or Nero or Borgia and hear his story. No sleuth-hound follows the scent as

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God's punishment follows the sin. If I leave my study and go to the street and cuff a playing child into the kennel, my punishment mounts the stair quicker than I, and waits for me at the top. My heart is much disturbed, and when policeman No. 346 rings the door-bell and asks to see the man of the house, I know what he wants and I do not want to see him. So is all sin and punishment from the flowing blood of Abel to the last crime that has been wrought to-day.

But oh, the patience, the gentleness, the long-suffering of the loving God! That modern prophet, Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, wrote to his friend Dr. John Brown, "What a blest and glad thing human existence would be if we fully realized that the infinitely powerful and infinitely wise God loves each one of us with an intensity infinitely beyond what the most fervid human spirit ever felt toward another, and with a concentration as if he had none else to think of." Such a sentence has boundless possibilities

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in its influence over the soul that accepts it. One can hardly conceive that sorrow or sin could master it. A rapture of joy is its only legitimate issue. It is delightful to think that that rapture will yet fill the world from pole to pole. And yet it will be only believing that God means what he says. Clemens Alexandrinus states it well: "The purified soul in the grandeur of contemplation embraces not the divine in a mirror or through a glass, but feasts eternally upon the vision in all its clearness, that vision with which the soul smitten with boundless love can never be satiated, and enjoys an inexhaustible gladness for endless ages, honored by a permanent continuance in all excellence." Here is the very heart of all religion in every land and age. Herbert Spencer says, "The Ultimate Reality is the sole existence." But how much this adds, that it is an existence of infinite love. An existence of infinite love is the one necessary thing, the sole reality. But the old theology had no room for

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these magnificent thoughts. It is very much harder for me to believe the infinite love of God because I was trained in the old theology, but is this what theology is for? The little girl who was naughty and was told that God saw and had written it down, cried, "I know it, he's always getting mad at something,"—a natural inference. Browning says truly of such a God—

> "For the loving worm within his clod
> Were diviner than a loveless God."

Love has been well called the divinest thing in the world, but a God full of love, that is by far the best of all. Every noble and beautiful thing in nature, history, society, music, painting, poetry, eloquence, patriotism, fatherhood, motherhood, infancy, and age is a revelation of God; every lovely sight, sweet sound, high thought, noble deed, happy memory, and delightful hope is a revelation of the love of God. God's love being true and the one great truth, all things on the whole are better, nobler, grander, richer,

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more hopeful, more glorious than any one has ever thought, and we might well, if we had no other way to show our delight, sing and laugh and dance and praise God all the days.

We must continually remember, because we have not been sufficiently taught it, how central and fundamental love is. James Freeman Clarke writes: "That which makes this earth seem solid is not the rocks and mountains in it, but the love in it. The longer we live in love, the more beautiful the world becomes, the more rich and precious life seems. As we live on we seem to grow younger, not older. It is the young who are oftenest tired of life; the good old man wonders that he could ever have been weary of life. He feels the infinite riches of the universe and thanks God in the depths of a happy heart for the gift of life." We can say for humanity, Wanted God, and only God and God forever. The touch of God is life to the soul. God is to the soul as sunshine is to flowers. God is to the

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soul as air is to the lungs. Atheism, even agnosticism is suffocation. Sin itself seems to wilt and die before the love of God. Touched by it the harlot becomes the Magdalene, and the drunkard in our own day becomes John B. Gough, at whose feet millions sit delighted. Here is the true God. "In him is light and in him is no darkness at all." In him is life and in him is no death at all. In him is love and in him is no hatred at all. This is the absolute religion. Nothing can rise higher than this. Here we rest.

In spite of all our moods and frames God is ever this. It has been said that it is winter not because the sun changes, but because the earth turns away from the sun; when it turns back summer comes quickly again. So the winter of the soul comes not because God changes but because our souls turn away from him. When they turn back, then "is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer" by his coming. And the truth that needs deeply to be imprest on all

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our hearts is that we can have all this fulness of life and blessing here and now. It is not the beatific vision of God in heaven that we want now, but the beatific vision of God in New York, Chicago, Paris, and London. "Thou satisfiest the desire of every living thing."

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III

Jesus Christ

HAVING darkened for us the beautiful face of God, the old theology went on to confuse and disturb our knowledge of and delight in Jesus Christ, his Son. Evidently one of the dearest desires of the Lord Jesus was that his church might be one, and that he himself might be the special bond of unity. How distressing it must be to his exalted nature that the theologians have contrived to make himself the special cause of division, from the days of the sad Council of Nice to this last Council in New York where three of the best of our citizens had the doors shut in their faces because of difficulties about the Trinity. As the scholastic theologian sits, like Marius in the ruins of Carthage, amid a torn and divided church that his Master prayed might be one, he

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ought to realize feelingly what a blunder he has made.

One of the chief marks of the greatness and goodness of the Lord Jesus is that men love him so much in spite of all that the Scholastics have said and done about him. And some of the worst of this saying and doing has been in the Councils themselves. Dean Milman in his Church History says, "A general Council was a field of battle. Men met with all the excitement, the estrangement, the jealousy, the antipathy engendered by fierce conflict. Each bishop was committed to his own opinion and was exasperated by opposition. They tried to triumph over their adversaries rather than dispassionately to seek the truth." Gregory Nazianzen, a church father of high name and sanctity, writes: "I have never known an assembly of bishops to terminate well. They strive only for power, they behave like angry lions to the small and like fawning spaniels to the great. It would

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seem as tho a herald had convoked to the Council all the gluttons, villains, liars and false swearers of the Empire. I will never more sit in these assemblies of cranes and geese." It is no wonder that such an assembly would throw the Church into confusion worse confounded, just as has happened. Erasmus writes, "Synods and decrees and Councils are by no means the fittest modes of repressing error unless truth depends simply on authority. On the contrary, the more dogmas there are, the more fruitful is the ground for producing heresies. Never was the Christian Church purer nor more undefiled than when the world was content with a single creed, and that the shortest creed we have."

And I quite fail to see why such a dust should be raised about this matter of the relation between God the Father and his Son. Every one agrees that the one great idea of Sonship is oneness of nature. A son is of the same nature as his father. And man being a son of God, as is

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well understood, the supreme Man must be the supreme Son of God. But when the theologians said that the Son was equal in power and glory with the Father, they simply gave the lie to the Son himself who said, and all his life confirmed it, "My Father is greater than I." The theologians have made Jesus himself do what he charges us not to do, to take to ourselves the highest place, "lest a more honorable man than thou come." And the commended confession was Simon Peter's, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Why not leave it thus?

Proverbs contain a great deal of downright common sense. They are wisdom and wit combined. There is one very homely proverb, "You must not look a gift horse in the mouth." It is improper and discourteous to discuss the value of a gift. If this morsel of wisdom had been received by the theologians they would have saved themselves much sorrow and the Church a world of trouble. When God gave to the world

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what the Apostle Paul calls his "unspeakable gift," the theologians turned at once with much acrimony to do the forbidden thing and to excommunicate all who rated the gift at a different valuation from their own. I for one confess that I have no two-foot rule to measure the stature of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I believe he was not given to us to measure his stature, much less to divide the church and cast out noble souls because their feet and inches are not just the same as our own; but he was given to us that we should walk in his steps and love one another as he loved us. But we have flown in the face of every divine precept, and all the divine example of Jesus, in our miserable and age-long quarrel about the divinity of Jesus. Nothing divine has come from that. Dean Fremantle gives a very impressive word, "Faith has suffered more from over-definition than from indefiniteness." And when we think of the wild fury and passion, the war and blood and thousandfold death like the

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battle of wolves and tigers, we feel that his words are true. Calvin himself wished that the word Trinity might be buried in oblivion. I think it is Augustine who says, "I can not tell how my soul and body are joined together, and yet that is my very self." If that be so what likelihood is there that we can analyze divinity? And the utter confusion and disorder and bitter strife that have resulted from this business should teach us how far we have erred.

When we turn from this most arrogant and divisive contention to the Lord Jesus himself, all is beautiful and glorious, and all true men can bow before him. What we believe is not a book nor a creed but a Person. Mr. Lecky writes, "It may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of human life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists." And in Daniel Webster's Private Confession of Faith we read, "I believe

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that the experiments and the subtleties of human wisdom are more likely to obscure than to enlighten the revealed will of God; and that he is the most accomplished scholar who has been educated at the feet of Jesus and in the college of fishermen."

About the person of Jesus all men of the most diverse views gather with devoted reverence. Renan writes, "To tear the name of Jesus from the world would be to shake it from its very foundations." That sounds more Christian than many things the Scholastics have said. I should want to claim that man, to draw him into the home, not to fling him from the door.

It is a profound word of Dean Stanley's, "When Bishop Pearson in his work on the Creed vindicates the divinity of Christ without the mention of any of those moral qualities by which he has bowed down the world before him, his grasp on the doctrine is far feebler than that of Rousseau or Mill, who seized the very attributes which

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constitute the marrow and essence of his nature." Robert Browning in a letter quotes with much approval the saying of Charles Lamb, when with a few friends he was imagining what they would do were the great heroes of the world to enter the room at that moment. Some one asked, "What if Jesus should enter?" Lamb at once altered the light and jocose tone of his voice and said with deep solemnity, "If Shakespeare were to enter we should all rise and greet him with the greatest reverence, but if Jesus Christ were to enter, we must all kneel."

And wonderfully this profound reverence has centered about the cross of Jesus Christ. It is hard for us to realize the shame and ignominy that the cross meant in the days of Jesus. It is one of the marvels of history that Jesus has made the emblem of a slave's degradation the symbol of the highest honor and dignity of the world, surmounting everywhere stately cathedrals and emperor's crowns. About this slave's shame

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bow all the wisdom and power and glory of the world. Romanes says, "The entire story of the cross is by far the most magnificent presentation in history. Only to a man wholly destitute of spiritual perception can it be that Christianity should fail to appear the greatest exhibition of the beautiful and the sublime and of all else that appeals to our spiritual nature, which has ever been known upon earth." And Mr. Emerson says of the Crucifixion, "This great defeat is hitherto our highest *fact*." We may well believe that the cross of Christ is the greatest exhibition of the divine love that this world has ever known. And may it not be that it is an exhibition of what the great God is doing in all worlds, sacrificing himself for his children in any way that it were wise and kind for him to do. We may suppose that there is something resembling the cross in every inhabited world; that God has made in every such world a demonstration of his love and sympathy that is the greatest power of uplift in

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that world. The benevolent nature that has tasted once the joy of doing good on the largest scale must continue it, and he who has known in this world the hidden, deep-lying joy of the cross, surely will he not under the compulsion of this principle be exhibiting that same self-sacrifice in other worlds, how many none can tell? We may be sure of this, that the cross exhibits some of the very deepest qualities of the divine nature and that, had we been deprived of the cross, we should have lost much, and of the best, of our knowledge of God. And it is a revelation in the way of tenderness and sympathy that reaches the lowest as well as the highest, the hovel as well as the palace or the University. It has written its story very deeply in the hearts and lives of the common people. It has affected all their traditions, their songs, their speech. The Bretons call the aspen, "The Trembler," and say it was the wood of which the cross was made and has trembled ever since Christ hung

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upon it. And I think, joyfully leaving out of view incomprehensible and divisive doctrines like the Trinity, we can all join in Paul's ardent words, "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth." Yes, we take the words from the lips of Charles Lamb, and when Jesus Christ comes we shall all, Unitarian with Roman Catholic, Jew with Gentile, we shall all *kneel*.

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IV

Man

I HAVE the greatest hesitation in writing this section of my treatise. If I considered my own interest I certainly should not write it at all. There are many who have followed me with a great deal of acquiescence so far, who may pause now. I fear that my Presbytery, which has been very forbearing with me, may feel that this is passing the bounds. But there are two reasons that compel me to write: first, because I think that it is true; and second, because if true, it is a most interesting and delightful truth, changing in a marvelous way our view of God and life and of the whole sum of things.

The old theology taught concerning man that God made him from the dust of the ground and placed him in a delightful garden. Out of man's

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side God took a rib and from it he made woman. In the garden were two trees. If man ate of one of them he would live forever; if, of the other, he would die forever. A serpent spoke to the woman and tempted her to eat of the forbidden tree. She ate and gave the fruit to the man who ate with her. Upon this followed the stupendous penalty that they and all their descendants became totally depraved and must be consigned to fearful tortures of fire and brimstone for endless ages. This is a most terrible presentation of the history and character and destiny of man. A tremendous burden of proof rests upon the old theologians. The burden of proof rests not upon us for rejecting it, for its very nature is full of reason for doubting it, large reason for utterly rejecting it. No ordinary foundation can bear up such a dreadful superstructure as this. What then is its foundation? It is an old document, venerable for its antiquity and always to be highly cherished as ancient literature—the book of Genesis.

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First we remark that if we had lighted in our reading upon a serpent that talked and a tree that could give eternal life or eternal death, we would conclude at once that this was a myth or fable designed, perhaps, to give moral teaching, but not to be considered historical fact. But further, however interesting this book of Genesis may be and is as an ancient writing, its authority as history has been for a long time passing away. I can well remember when it was considered a most serious heresy to doubt that Noah's deluge was universal. A man was called an infidel who dared to say it was partial. Unquestionably the record means that it was universal, but we now believe that it was partial. I can still better remember how the geologists were furiously assailed when they asserted that the world had been thousands of years and not six days in the making. Livingstone asked an opponent of Geology where the shells in the rocks came from. He answered, "When God made

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the rocks he made the shells in them." A book was published called "Popular Geology subversive of Divine Revelation." This is one utterance of the book: "Certainly of all the lately discovered sciences which the enemy of God and man has thus pushed to his destroying ends, no one has been so appropriate to his purpose or has been so assiduously driven forward to the accomplishment of his aims as the popular new science of Geology. To enumerate all the infernal artillery which the subtle enemy of God and man has put into the hands of his vassals to aim at the everlasting monument of revealed truth would require his own unspent breath and unwearied tongue." This blast ought to have finally ended Geology, but it seems that it did not. No one reads this fierce book now, but millions are studying Geology to-day.

The record of Genesis distinctly says that the world was made in six days. When Geology had firmly established itself, most heroic efforts were

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put forth to show that the days of Genesis were long periods of time—about which explanation it would be interesting to hear the comment of the original author of Genesis. To him, doubtless, the days were days and nothing else, and the seventh day the day that became the Jewish Sabbath and nothing else.

Again, students of human history have discovered that man has been thousands upon thousands of years an inhabitant of the earth. They were assailed as infidels, but the intelligent world has come to believe that man has lived here for long periods of time, far beyond the notion of the book of Genesis.

Again, some centuries ago there came one of God's great revelations through the minds of Copernicus and Galileo. This revolutionized all man's thinking about the great system of the worlds. These prophets who were stoned for their contradiction of the book of Genesis taught us the wonders of modern astronomy. For this

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Copernicus was condemned to seclusion and silence, and only published his great work as he was on his death-bed. Galileo, with bended knees and with his hand upon the Gospels, was compelled to pronounce the following words, "I abjure, curse, and detest the error and heresy of the motion of the earth, and promise that I will never teach verbally or in writing that the sun is the center of the universe and immovable, and that the earth is not the center of the universe and movable." But all this did not stop the movement of the earth, and Galileo did not seem to think it would, for as he rose from his knees he murmured, "It still moves." And so far as I have heard it is moving yet.

In all these particulars we have made our progress in the way of modern knowledge in opposition to, and really in spite of, the book of Genesis.

Of late there has come a much more important departure from the teaching of that book. For these other matters were in the realm of nature,

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and this is in the realm of man—and therefore touches us much more nearly. The theory of Evolution teaches that man has developed upward—that he bears in his very frame the marks of his intimate association with lower orders of life, and that, instead of a single day of creation, immense periods have been occupied in the slow process of development by which he is moving forward to-day with the same steady progress as thousands of years ago. As the theory of Evolution stands to-day received in all our colleges and universities it takes its place as one of the very grandest products of human thought and investigation that the world has ever known. But it is distinctly opposed to the story of the book of Genesis.

It is a remarkable fact that the great leaders of thought who worked out the theory of Evolution builded better than they knew. They little thought when they were patiently seeking the facts as to man's history, the cold, scientific facts,

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that they were taking part as well in a great theological movement that was beginning in the religious world—that they were helping to deliver their fellow men from a cruel bondage under which they had suffered for ages. They were called infidels and atheists but were really doing a great religious work, while their theological opponents were doing their best to injure true religion. It is a remarkable fact that two great movements have been going forward together and have been mutually helpful—science and the higher criticism—doing one of the greatest works of all history. And thankful may we be who live at such a time as this when so much light is breaking forth in the realms of science and theology.

We see thus how once and again and again the story of Genesis as to the creation and origin of man has been contradicted by the patient investigation of earnest and laborious and intelligent men, the results of whose labors are received today in all our halls of learning. And yet the third

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chapter of the book of Genesis is the basis on which has been erected the whole terrible scholastic theology. This dreadful combination—the fall of man in Adam, the utter corruption and total depravity of the race, and the endless torment of millions upon millions of our fellow men—hangs upon the third chapter of the book of Genesis. Was there ever such an unspeakably horrible combination? Was there ever so frail and feeble a foundation?

Now, putting away prejudice and the influence of early training, it becomes us carefully to balance these two theories. The one is the theory based on a story with the look of a fable and on a writing that has been again and again proved to be mistaken as to certain great facts of history. The other is the theory that is practically accepted by educated men to-day, that man has come to his place in this world by a long process of growth and evolution, which devout men believe to be one of the greatest marvels of God's

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handiwork. When we have carefully considered which opinion is likely to be true, that of the old theology or of evolution, it surely adds an amazing zest and relish to our reception of the newer opinion that it sweeps away as by a magician's wand this terrible combination—the Fall, total depravity, and endless torment—the greatest burden that humanity has ever known. By the teaching of evolution it is a grotesque blunder to call man a fallen being. He is probably the best example of a rising being anywhere to be found. The one thing he has been doing for ages is to *rise*. He has risen from the merest microscopic life to glorious manhood—he has risen from the low, the bestial, the utterly selfish nature that eats its own progeny, to a high, wise, self-sacrificing, entirely devoted and inspired spiritual life, to becoming partaker of a divine nature, and sharing in a true sense the very life of God; he has risen to the true manhood, Son of Man and Son of God. One word

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is peculiarly true of him, the Easter word, "He is risen indeed." I can fancy some mighty angel telling his comrades the wondrous story of man's age-long rise, closing with the words, "And he calls himself a fallen creature." This must add to the hilarity of heaven.

And with the departure of the dogma of the fall of man go the dogmas of total depravity and endless torment. The old theology taught the doctrine of total depravity in its largest sweep because it was a logical deduction from the fall, and everything must yield to logic. They forgot Luther's word, "Away with logicians, when we must believe fishermen." By the logic of the system, even infants shared this full depravity and went to hell with the rest. The most wise and witty comment that I ever heard on this conclusion was that of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. He refers to such monstrous words as these of Calvin ("Institutes," II. i. 8): "Altho infants have not yet produced the fruits of their own unright-

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eousness, they have the seed planted in themselves; nay, their whole nature is, as it were, a seed-bed of sin, and therefore can not but be odious and abominable to God." He then adds the beautiful words of Jesus, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven"; and asks, "Do you mean, John Calvin, that Heaven *lies* about us in our infancy?"

The modern view of non-elected infants is well given in Albert Lancaster's lines:

An "unelected infant" sighed out its little breath,
And wandered thro' the darkness along the shores of death
Until the gates of heaven agleam with pearl it spied,
And ran to them and clung there and would not be denied.
At last the gates were opened; a man with features mild
Stooped down and raised the weeping and unelected child.
Immortal light thrilled softly from avenues of bliss
As on the infant's forehead the spirit placed a kiss.
"Who are you, thus to hallow my unelected brow?"
"Dear child, my name was Calvin, but I see things better now."

Further than this, the old theology taught us that this world and race of ours was under a

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curse. This world is a vale of tears and a wilderness of wo.

"Through sorrow's night and danger's path,
Amid the deepening gloom
We servants of an injured King
Are marching to the tomb."

"The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here
Are enough for life's wo, full enough for its cheer."

"This world is all a fleeting show
For man's delusion given."

And death was darkest of all, a horrid specter to terrify mankind.

"Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound.
Mine ears attend the cry.
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where ye must shortly lie."

Professor Park used to tell with great gusto the story of Dr. West of Stockbridge, who was in his day one of New England's leading clergymen. Professor Kirkland, when a student, was taught by him, and taught the horrible system as it is seldom taught now. He would hear it all in the

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study, and then come out to the beautiful sunshine and look over the lovely Stockbridge valley and say, "God is good in spite of what old West says." The Gospel is sunshine in the open air; the old theology is a smoking candle in a dark cellar. Blow it out, wet the cinder, and come out into the sunlight! When we hear the laughter of children and see the beauty of flowers and the glory of sunsets, we feel sure it was all a monstrous blunder.

> "If we poor souls involved in our own cloud
> Deem the wide world lies darkling in a shroud,
> Raving, the world holds no felicity!
> One child's clear laughter may rebuke the lie."

How grateful is the teaching that man has not fallen into such a corruption that the world must be curst for him, but rather has risen from ignorance and sensuality to a condition in which he can enjoy all this beautiful world and help to make it more beautiful and happy under the smile of a most loving God.

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And as for death itself, which the old theology made so dreadful, the truth is that if we live as God meant us to live, death is a priceless boon, a freedom from the infirmities and limitations of the flesh, a graduation to a higher school, an entrance into a most exalted spiritual society, a rapture of reunion with deeply loved ones gone before, a new nearness and vision of God himself, in short by far the most delightful experience the soul has ever yet enjoyed, to be followed by larger and fuller revelations. As dying Bunsen said, "It is sweet to die," and as John Howe wrote, "Thank God, no one can rob us of the glorious privilege of dying."

Men have long strained themselves over the problem of the origin of evil, with no satisfying results. May it not be because it never had an origin? Topsy "never was born, never had a father, never had a mother, just growed"—and evil has done the same, only it has grown *less*. It is itself the lower and worse thing that has been

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put away, sloughed off in the movement of the ages. What is wrong in a man is not wrong in a dog or tiger. What is wrong in a civilized man is not wrong in a savage. Savages to-day are reminders to us of what our fathers were. The old arguments in favor of polygamy and slavery failed here. Because Abraham and David had wives and slaves we should have the same. Oh, no! They had them, but we should not have them. Because Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord, some of the Scotch Covenanters said, "Hew Archbishop Sharp to pieces," and they did it thoroughly, but they made a miserable mistake.

With a movement like the movement of the spheres, grossness, cruelty, animality, are *going*. The brawn is growing weaker, perhaps, tho that is doubtful, but the brain is growing stronger. Pharaoh and Nero have had their day—this century would electrocute them. To say that man is totally depraved—prone to all evil and averse

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from all good—is simply an atrocious falsehood. It is a statement after the manner of Baron Munchausen. He would admire it, but not dare to parallel it, as being quite beyond him. I deny the doctrine and I resent it. After an experience with my brother men of nearly seventy years, I find it false in every particular. I have met rogues and rascals, but a host of kindly, gracious men and women and children and many exquisitely beautiful souls, every thought or recollection of whom is a delight and inspiration. As well might one say that the glorious sun is a blazing meteor full fraught with destruction because sometimes its rays blast and burn—or that the beautiful flowers are seductive poisons because of the poppy and mandragora—or that the sweet airs of heaven are deadly vapors because of the black hole of Calcutta—or that the cold-flowing waters are fatal because in them may lurk typhoid or cholera. My heart responds fully to Wordsworth's beautiful lines,—

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"I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning.
Alas: the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning."

Burke said you could not draw an indictment against a whole people. This doctrine of total depravity is a slander upon a whole magnificent race of beings.

I am aware that this new view of man's character and destiny is a great departure from the opinion that has long prevailed. I know that the old views have been deeply fixt in the hearts of men. It will take a strong wrench to tear them away. One of our bitterest words is miscreant. Throw that at any man and see how quickly he will resent it. Yet "miscreant" simply means one who believes differently from his neighbors. So firmly was the system bound upon men that not to believe it was to be a most dreadful man, a *miscreant*. There is always the strong conservatism of human nature that makes any departure from use and want difficult. A witty French-

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man says that when the Lord informed heaven that he was about to create the worlds, an angel cried, "But, Lord, Lord, what is to become of Chaos?" We want to remember Bacon's wise word, "Froward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as an innovation." When coal was first introduced in London a law was passed making it a capital offense to burn it, and it is said that one man was executed for transgressing. The first cargo of ice that came to New Orleans was sent away by a mob, and the ice-house demolished. Lord John Russell said, "It takes England forty-five years to accomplish any necessary reform." It has taken more than ten times forty-five years to reform our theology.

The chief and sufficient reason for adopting the new opinion is the unutterably monstrous character of the old one. It is its own sufficient antidote. The heathen damned, the ignorant and neglected lost, the vast mass of men thus far undone, a mere fragment saved, the best hope of

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men to die in infancy—surely this can not be the good tidings of great joy to all people.

Dr. Parker, of London, in his funeral discourse at the death of Henry Ward Beecher, said, "The one man that the church must get rid of at all costs is the systematic theologian who attaches less value to his theology than to his system. *That man must go!* He destroys more souls than have been ruined by all the infidels that have ever lived. Where system is regarded as complete and final, it is fraught with inexpressible mischief, and is to be denounced by every man who is in sympathy with the cross of Christ."

A resident of China writes about the miserable foot-binding of the people: "We have listened with our own ears to the cries of a little girl undergoing the torturing process. Such agonizing wails never before fell on our ears. They were the shrieks of a child absolutely wild with suffering. When the ligatures were loosened and the shocking succession of breathless screams ended

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in long-drawn wails of exhaustion and misery, the listener turned almost sick with horror and sympathy—yet a mother was the deliberate torturer of her own baby, and a father listened to its cries." This is very bad, but far worse is the old theology that worthy fathers and mothers taught to frightened children. It was accepted by the children without realizing thought—a matter of memorizing from a catechism, not receiving in the heart. When the heart woke indeed to realization, it rejected with horror or went wild with frantic fear. In millions of cases it has done one thing or the other.

Let me make an earnest protest against the continued use of the Shorter Catechism in my own church. It contains the false doctrine as to man and the present state of things, in its worst form. The best thing that can be said for this Catechism is that the first study of it and the continued repetition of it are so entirely grievous and mortally wearisome that it gives a strong distaste

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for the whole thing in the minds of young people. It is as painful to the mind as foot-binding is to the body. God pity and bring to a better mind the parents who afflict their children with either of them! In Dr. Chalmers' "Life," Vol. 4, p. 449, we find a talk of his with his daughter about the Catechism. "There's some of your stour, orthodox folk just ever ready to stretch the Bible to square with the Catechism; all very well, needful as a landmark, but" (kindling up) "what I say is, do not let the wretched, mutilated thing be thrown between me and the Bible." Said his daughter, "Bacon compares the Bible to the well-spring and says he were a huge fool that would drink but from the tank." Dr. Chalmers laughed, "Ha, ha! where does Bacon say that? It's nasty in the tank too, sometimes." I have heard very many warm encomiums upon the Catechism, but I suggest in all fairness that our Board of Publication, which still distributes thousands of these Catechisms, should print on the title-page two

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mottoes: "For the huge fools," Bacon, and "It's nasty in the tank sometimes," Chalmers. I should think I had not lived in vain if I could deliver our young people from the sad infliction of the Shorter Catechism. I know one dear friend, now with God, who in a large family went to sleep commonly after answering his question, happy youth, and was awakened to answer when the next one came. And another, in a family of three children, learned every third question and then had only to place himself rightly for the recital. When Mr. Beecher delivered his famous lectures on preaching at Yale University, he launched out into a philippic against our dark and gloomy churches. In the time of free questioning at the close of the address, Dr. Leonard Bacon, president of the Seminary, asked in a quizzical way, "Mr. Beecher, don't you think it might be a good idea to hang one or two architects?" Mr. Beecher reflected for a moment, and answered, "No, I should not do that—but

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I'd make them learn the Shorter Catechism." Perhaps that might be tried as a penalty for this bad business of speeding automobiles. It would surely be effective.

The old view of the character and destiny of man has been the cause of the bitter hostility to religion in a vast company of those who have been called hostile. It was this system, and not the religion of Jesus, that provoked the sharp arrows of many called "infidels." This system was the constant theme of Col. Robert Ingersoll. Without it his occupation would have been gone. Ingersoll, in grateful remembrance, should have endowed Princeton Seminary in his will, for it furnished him all his controversial material.

May we not hope that many will welcome the new and beautiful light upon the subject of their own very nature? It is one glory of our time that there is a greater readiness to receive new truth than ever in the history of the world. Blest be God! new truth will always be coming. Pro-

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fessor Bruce says well, "New wine is always in course of being produced by the eternal vine of truth, demanding in some particulars of belief and practise new bottles for its preservation, and it receives for answer the order to be content with the old ones." We must never be content with the old ones, but fling them away and demand new ones for our time and ourselves.

In Hoffman's well-known picture, "The Child Christ in the Temple," the beautiful child stands in the center of the picture, and near him, leaning upon a staff, intently listening, is a very old Rabbi—the old dispensation earnestly listening to the new. Ah, it is fine when even old age receives the new truth, and the new truth accepted by the old and borne on the shoulders of age and experience will gloriously conquer the world.

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V

Future Punishment

PERHAPS the most flagrant transgression of the old theology is its teaching as to future punishment. We may in general characterize it as the worst possible dogma upon the subject. The barbarians who formulated it were much too ignorant to realize the full sweep of their own doctrine, and were remorselessly cruel. Froissart tells this story of a Baron in whose immense chimney the great fire was going out for lack of fuel. He sent for wood again and again, but it did not come. He became quite furious, and when the wood was announced to be at the castle door, he hurried out, picked up the ass with the fagots of wood on its back, carried the whole thing to the fireplace, and hurled ass and wood and all into the raging flame. Whereat the guests

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laughed heartily. The Baron ought surely to have been hanged for this, but it passed as a cheerful joke. These men could believe in endless torment; we can not. But even these cruel men did not receive the modern doctrine, for the Roman Catholic Church always taught the great and very merciful doctrine of Purgatory, but Protestantism has taken hell from the Roman Catholics and rejected Purgatory, producing the most diabolical doctrine of future punishment that could be devised. After a few years of earthly life the great mass of the world's population have been remorselessly swept into endless torments. And God is Love!

Sismondi, the Italian historian, came to England with a great admiration for its history and constitutional liberty and with much respect for the Protestantism that had helped to make England what it is. But he went to church and heard a sermon that denied an intermediate state and preached the endless torment of the wicked.

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He was full of indignation, and left the church vowing that he would never again enter a church holding such a creed, and would never help to spread what the English call their Reformation, for by its side Romanism is a religion of mercy and peace.

It is wise and well to give some of the utterances in which this doctrine has been taught.

Here are some of the many expressions of Jonathan Edwards on the subject of hell: "He will trample them beneath his feet with inexpressible fierceness. He will crush their blood out and make it fly, so that it will sprinkle his garments and stain all his raiment"; "You can not stand before an infuriated tiger even—what then will you do when God rushes against you in all his wrath?" What a beautiful conception of God this is! He says, "In some heathen countries the manner of disposing of dead bodies is to dig a pit and put in it a great quantity of fuel, to put the dead bodies on the pile and set it on

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fire. This is some image of the burning of dead souls in hell." He says again: "The whole world will probably be converted into a great lake or liquid globe of fire, a vast ocean of fire in which the wicked shall be overwhelmed, in which the wicked shall be tossed to and fro, having no rest day or night, billows of fire continually rolling over their heads. They shall forever be full of quick sense; their heads, their eyes, their tongues, their hands, their feet, their loins, and their vitals shall forever be full of glowing, melting fire, and also they shall be eternally full of the most lively sense to feel the torment." This is bad enough, but there is one touch that caps the climax: "The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever, it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them sensible of their own happiness, it will give them a *more lively relish of it*—oh, it will make them sensible how happy they are." The hell is pretty bad, but the heaven seems to me to be worse.

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Mr. Spurgeon sometimes tried to equal Edwards in this matter, but I do not think he has quite as "lively a relish" of it. In his sermon on the parable of Dives and Lazarus he says: "See how his tongue hangs from between his blistered lips. How it excoriates and burns the roof of his mouth as if it were a firebrand." Here is another specimen of a child's hell, quoted from a Roman Catholic book by Rev. Mr. Furness, published in England not long ago: "The fourth dungeon is the boiling kettle. Is it really a kettle that is boiling? No. Then what is it? Hear what it is. The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy; the brain is boiling and bubbling in his head; the marrow is boiling in his bones."

Here is a graphic description of hell from lines of the year 1300:

"Some the jaws wide open wrast
And poured in the lead all hot,
Bade him thereof to drunken fast

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And skink to all his friends about.
A devil came there at the last
That was the Master, well I wot,
A glowing coulter in hiin thrast
And thro' the heart the iron smote.
White-hot sword blades some did set
To back and breast and either side,
In his heart the pointers met
And made great, gaping woundes wide."

As respects such pictures of the future life Mr. Lecky well exprest the natural feeling of the human mind in the indignant words: "That an all-righteous and all-merciful Creator in the full exercise of these attributes deliberately calls into existence beings whom he has from eternity destined to endless, unmitigated torture is a proposition at once so extravagantly absurd and so ineffably atrocious that its adoption might lead men to doubt the universality of moral perceptions. Such teaching is, in fact, demonism and in its extreme form. It attributes to the Creator acts of injustice and barbarity which it would be impossible for the imagination to surpass—acts

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before which the most monstrous excesses of human cruelty dwindle into insignificance—acts which are in fact worse than any theologians have attributed to the devil. As is customary when they enunciate a proposition which is palpably self-contradictory, they call it a mystery and an occasion for faith."

Mr. Beecher in his statement of belief before the Congregational Association says: "The medieval representation of the punishment of the wicked is a spiritual barbarism worthy of having been invented in just such a place, and by such demons as have been invented for it. That there will be pain and penalty in another world for those who have perverted their nature in this world I fully believe. But those exquisite and infernal descriptions of the material and sensuous torments of the lost, rolling in flames of fire, writhing in the folds of serpents, gnawed by demons, pierced by fiery forks, clawed, dragged, tossed, roasted by an infinity of disgusting devils

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in an eternity of torments, increasing with every age, the capacity to suffer increasing also, till the whole infinite round of imaginable space is filled with the smoke and shrieks of their torment—such a dogma is an insult to reason, to the moral sense of mankind; and if it shall be ascribed to God, it is a blasphemy that would justify the annihilation of its propagators."

The old-theology men confess the dreadful nature of their doctrine, but say that they must teach it because it is taught in the words of Christ. This we absolutely deny. The Greek word "aionios" is the one that is relied on to maintain the endlessness of future punishment, but Greek scholars know that it does not necessarily mean endless, that it very often does not mean endless. Here is one of the most damning facts about the old theologians, that they take a word that does not of itself mean endless, and upon this awful theme compel it to bear the most awful sense. I accuse them of utmost cruelty in so doing. I lay,

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at the door of this false interpretation of theirs, blasted lives, broken hearts, dreadful suicides, and wide-spreading infidelity and atheism. Mr. McCullock, Secretary of the United States Treasury, tells us that when his cousin, a most lovely lady, was dying, her pastor, Dr. Fessenden, father of Senator Fessenden, came to her bedside and said: "Sister, this is probably the last time we shall meet. I want to ask you one more question: are you willing to be damned for the glory of God?" She hesitated, when he repeated the question with much severity. At last she answered, "Yes, I think I am." Again I cry out against the remorseless cruelty of the old theology. Think of a woman, a gentle, timid woman—a dying woman—belabored with such a question as that! They used to say of the old theology,—

> "A text or dogma
> Once you trip on it, entails
> Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
> One sure if another fails."

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There is one text which, perhaps more than any other, has led to the acceptance of endless torment. It is Matt. xxv. 46: "And these shall go away into endless punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." But a right understanding of the words sweeps away the dreadful doctrine. In the Greek we read, "these shall go away into the eternal *kolasis*." I open my Liddell and Scott's Greek Dictionary, a standard book, and repeat to the reader what I find as the meanings of "kolasis"—"pruning of trees; hence checking, punishing, chastisement, correction." The word is from the verb "kolapto," to hew or cut, so comes pruning as the first meaning. But does any gardener prune a vine to destroy it? It is a hard process to the vine, but it helps the vine. And the Lord Jesus in this verse teaches us distinctly that the punishment is for correction. What a cruel heart it is that would twist that to eternal torment! I charge it home upon the old theology that it is remorseless cruelty so to teach.

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The doctrine of endless torment is a combination of ignorance and cruelty, two of the most desperate crimes of humanity. Shall we not all join in Luther's exclamation in his letter to Hansen von Rechenberg: "God forbid that I should limit the time of acquiring faith to the present life! In the depths of divine mercy there may be an opportunity to win it in the future state."

A word may be added as to Edwards' suggestion that the sight of hell will increase the happiness of the saints—will give them a "more lively relish" of it. In this he follows the word of an old father, Tertullian, who vents the same most abominable notion. Bishop Bickersteth, in his "Yesterday, To-day, and Forever" gets a better view in saying that lost souls find their only "lenitive of pain" in gazing at the bliss of the saved. Upon this Dean Plumptre wisely comments: "Might it not even be said that there is a higher spiritual excellence in the character which rejoices that others are in blessedness which

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it can not share, than in that of the blest who contemplate the torments of the lost with an undisturbed complacency?" Most of us will agree with the Dean, tho it seems rather an inversion of heaven and hell. I, for one, if I were where they were having a "more lively relish" from the endless torment of some one else, would have only one feeling—"Please let me out—anywhere, anywhere out of *this* world." Our President Roosevelt in his Annual Message to Congress has this to say of the crime of lynching: "No man can take part in the torture of a human being—" (let me pause a moment to say, no man can have a "lively relish" of it without taking the very worst part in it)—"No man can take part in the torture of a human being without having his own moral nature permanently lowered." How then with these saints and their lively relish of hell? How long will they remain saints? And how with the great God who for ages has been contemplating this torture and strengthening the

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victims to endure? How will it affect his moral nature?

John Locke says on this subject of future punishment: "By death some understand endless torments in hell. But it seems a strange way of understanding a law which requires the plainest and directest words, that by death should be meant eternal life in misery. Can any one be supposed to intend, by a law which says, 'for felony thou shalt surely die,' not that he should lose his life, but be kept alive in exquisite and perpetual torments?"

Whittier wrote to a friend: "I am not a universalist, for I believe in the possibility of the perpetual loss of the soul that persistently turns away from God, in the next life as in this. But I do believe that the divine love and compassion follow us in all worlds, and that the Heavenly Father will do the best that is possible for every creature He has made. What that will be must be left to His infinite wisdom and goodness."

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Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol, in his sermon on the "Final State and Condition of Men," says, "The eternal punishment is of the wicked, and the wicked may repent and change." He says further: "To suppose that a man's happiness and misery to all eternity should absolutely and unchangeably be fixed and determined by the uncertain behavior of a few years in this life is a supposition even more unreasonable than that a man's mind and manners should be completely formed and fashioned in his cradle and his whole future fortune and condition depend altogether upon his infancy. . . . Repentance is therefore not impossible, even in hell."

As to the opinion of the Jews upon the subject of endless torment, one of the most learned Rabbis, Emmanuel Deutsch, whom George Eliot calls "the man among living men who knows the most about the Talmud," in his essay on the Talmud writes: "There is no everlasting damnation according to the Talmud. There is only

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a temporary punishment even for the worst of sinners." In conversation with Mr. Cox, author of "Salvator Mundi," he said: "Of this you may be quite sure, that there is not a word in the Talmud which lends any support to that damnable doctrine of endless torment." The Rabbi feels strongly on the subject, and we can not wonder.

The new theology would make room for a full discussion of two varieties of opinion on future punishment—an intermediate state and conditional immortality. Either of these is an immense advance on the absolute universality of endless torment for the wicked that the old theology so cruelly insists upon and with so very little foundation. An intermediate state is based upon the idea that very many, when they leave this world, are germinal souls—souls in bud—too bad for heaven and too good for hell. Bishop Butler says, "Analogy," Part 1, chap. 3, that virtue becoming very strong in the future life and being "seen by any order of vicious throughout the uni-

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versal kingdom of God, would have a tendency to amend those of them that are capable of amendment. If our notion of the plan of Providence were enlarged in any sort proportional to what late discoveries have enlarged our views with respect to the material world, representations of this kind would not appear absurd or extravagant." Christianity in general accepts the doctrine of an intermediate state. Many Protestants accept it, and the Protestants who do not accept it are but a fragment of the whole Christian world. It is a very interesting fact that the two great branches of the Christian Church, the Roman Catholic and the Greek, both hold to an intermediate state of purification. It is very pleasing to know that the men who insist so positively on endless torment for all not saved in this life, form but a small portion of the Christian Church—that those who cherish so very undesirable and uncharitable an opinion are not as numerous as they think or *sound*. General Grant

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tells us his first experience with wolves. He heard a great pack howling down upon his solitary companion and himself. But his comrade laughed and said it was either one or two, and so it proved. Wolves are very noisy and very cruel, and there are not so many of them as you think.

Many who receive the new theology accept the doctrine of conditional immortality; that sin tends distinctly to destroy the soul, and so the wages of sin are really death. Mr. Beecher says: "The number of those who hold that immortality is not natural but a gift of God to those who have gained sufficient moral development is increasing, nor does the New Testament forbid such a supposition. Suppose some men go out of existence and that is the end of them. Suppose men attain unto eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ in so far as they have unfolded here from animal conditions and are susceptible of further development in time to come. Or suppose their low moral condition at death brings the experi-

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ment to an end. When a man has spent the forces of life here and has not reached the condition which makes another stage possible to him, suppose he simply goes out. He that would live on must live well now."

This teaching has been an immense relief to many thoughtful minds, from the most distressing teaching of the old theology. Of conditional immortality Coleridge says: "I am confident that this doctrine would be a far stronger motive than the present, for no man will believe eternal misery of himself, but millions would admit that if they did not amend their lives they would be undeserving of living forever." There is a beautiful Hindu saying which the good Lord may practise in his treatment of undeveloped or erring souls: "Conquer a man who never gives, by gifts. Subdue untruthful men by truthfulness. Vanquish an angry man by gentleness; and overcome the evil man by goodness." There are many thoughts that lie in the direction of an ut-

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terance of Swedenborg, that Bishop Huntington commends as worthy of serious consideration, that in some respects hell may be more of a hell to those who are not in it than to those who are. The slums are not as grievous in some respects to those who live in them as to those who go "slumming" through them. It looks, too, as tho the only real satisfaction of God would be, not in tormenting sinners, but that sinful men should fully acknowledge that God is right, that goodness is right, that obedience is right, and that they were wrong. And, after all, faith in the future life is not so much that it will be thus and so, but that it will be as God arranges, and he who has done such wonders for us here will not fail us there, so that both life and death are a most profound faith in God. When Lincoln's father was dying, his son, then a young man, wrote to him: "Remember to call upon and confide in our great and good and merciful Maker, who will not turn away from you in any extremity. He notes the

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fall of the sparrow and numbers the hairs of our heads, and He will not forget the dying man who puts his trust in Him." Here Lincoln writes the profound yet simple theology of the universal human heart.

The study of the whole subject of future punishment may teach us that we damn others a great deal more easily than God does. That is a work about which He is extremely slow.

And another thought may be added, that the spiritual life is itself the highest proof of immortality; live it and you will know it: so the sinful life is the most profound proof of hell; live it and you will know it. It was a wise man who said, "I believe in hell because I have been there so often."

I shall be assailed upon this head by the usual remark that I am "letting down the bars." I earnestly wish that I could persuade the man who is so zealous in putting up the bars that he is probably doing it *from the outside*. If there is

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one sin more deadly than another, it is self-righteousness; and the horror of it should make our friend drop the bar that he is laboriously putting very high up. With his harsh severity he is probably fencing himself *out*.

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VI

The Church

WE give the name of church commonly to a special building with Gothic windows and lofty spire, with long-drawn aisle and fretted vault, the Gregorian chant echoing through its lofty arches, the mitred priest or tiaraed Pope ministering at the altar, and the people bowed before the sacred symbols. But it is quite possible that there may be all these things and there may not be any church at all. Channing says: "One of the coldest spots on earth is a church without devotion. What is it to me that a costly temple is set apart by ever so many rites for God's service, that priests who trace their lineage to apostles have consecrated it, if I find it thronged by the worldly and undevout? This is no church to me."

An American was being led by a verger through

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Westminster Abbey—a man was kneeling by the shrine of Edward IV. The verger told the man he must not do that. The American asked if the man was not praying. The verger answered, "No doubt, but if we allowed that sort of thing we should have them praying all around." To a vast company from bishops to vergers, the church is for the fees, not for the devotion. Rev. Sydney Smith said some bishops were so like Judas Iscariot he was inclined to receive the doctrine of the apostolic succession.

There is an ancient legend that runs in this wise: Jesus came down in the midst of an Auto da fé, where many were being burned to death for their faith. He showed his sympathy with them and was cast into prison. At midnight the chief inquisitor visited him in his cell and said to him: "You are wrong in coming back to the earth to interfere with the work of your church. You made a mistake not to accept the offer of the Tempter on the mount, and to undertake to

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convert the world by silent and spiritual forces. It has been necessary for the church to correct your work and supplement it with the sword of Cæsar. You also to-morrow shall be burned." Jesus answered not a word, but looked into the eyes of the inquisitor with his mild gaze, stooped and kissed the old man's bloodless lips. The inquisitor opened the door and bade the Master depart and never return again.

A friend of mine, an elder in a Presbyterian church, was fighting the battle of the church one Sunday morning. His opponent challenged him to go to a near-by fashionable church and see what their reception would be. They were a very plain couple. They entered. No one noticed them or offered them a seat. The elder insisted on giving the church people full time, but the service began and still they stood uninvited. Then his secular friend leaned toward the churchman and said, "Let us get out of the damned place."

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Such a church as this makes up for its utter disregard of every precept of the Lord Jesus by a very special emphasis on dead doctrine and equally dead ceremonies. It lengthens the creed and shortens the commandments. And how dead and dark it can become no mortal man knows. Chrysostom once declared, "If I have ever administered the eucharist when not fasting, let my name be wiped out of the catalog of the bishops, let Christ cast me out of his kingdom." It is said that in Italy some bandits attacked a traveler, killed him and stole his goods, but they would not touch the meat that was in his wagon because it was the time of Lent. "Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith."

And a church of this sort has uniformly degraded and debased the people committed to its care. They are a disgrace to it. The church has taught them a mean theology, and as a result

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the meanest people in the whole world are sometimes found on the church-rolls. They are strict in doctrine and very careful in ritual, but they are mean in their shops, mean in the street, mean in their homes, their kitchens and parlors, and meanest of all in their very hearts. The church has taught them to seek their own salvation by receiving certain dogmas and doing certain ceremonies instead of by being noble men and women and giving their lives for others. Ordinary men, like Abou ben Adhem or Longfellow's Village Blacksmith, loathe them, and the country town despises them as they pass, for they never lift a finger to help man, woman, or child.

In the year 1893 Dr. Ernest Hart analyzed the water of the sacred well at Mecca, where the pilgrims crowded, and found it swarming with cholera bacilli. His warning was unheeded, and on June 24, when 100,000 people were gathered, the plague struck them like a cloud-burst and the ground was covered with the dead. A Turkish

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regiment was ordered to bury them. It began the work 700 strong, and when it was done only 200 of them were left. This comes, and it will always come, from having the sacred wells poisoned. There is not a sham church in the whole world teaching sham doctrine and ritual but the dead are lying thickly about it, while the church is stoutly insisting it is the only true church and gateway to heaven.

There is and always will be a Church of God, and it will be quite the opposite of this other, as a man differs from a corpse. It is a very far-spreading institution. Dr. Washburn, President of Robert College at Constantinople, was invited to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. He wrote in reply to the invitation: "I sympathize with the spirit of your circular. There is a unity in religion broader and deeper than the world has ever generally recognized. I am more and more imprest every year, as I am brought into close contact with so many different faiths, that

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there is a God to whom we are responsible for our actions; that to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God is essentially the foundation of all religion. The Holy Spirit leads men of the most diverse faiths to the knowledge of one common Father."

The man who loves God and is full of his spirit, who walks in love and in righteousness and enjoys the peace of God and the joy of overcoming sin, who spends his days doing his appointed work faithfully and in all ways serving his fellow men, belongs to this true church. The church made up of such people and calling for such people is One and always must be, and orders, sacraments, and ritual are the merest trifles compared with the faith and work of such a church.

One of the great sins of the sham church is that it keeps out so many who are in the true church, well meaning, right feeling and right doing men and women who have not had a certain kind of experience, or can not accept a very

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absurd dogma, or do not enjoy a very joyless style of religious service. And being kept out, they have all the discomforts of the banished, and are discouraged or alienated, and, instead of helping religion, have been inclined to a seeming opposition and to lead others that way. The results have been very large and very disastrous. It will do a world of good to tear off the mask from this false church and lift up the church of God-fearers and man-lovers and so true followers of Jesus. Lincoln was asked why he had never joined the church, and answered that when he found a church that had these two foundation principles—of love to God and love to man—he would join it at once. Well, this is the true church, and it is coming, and men like Lincoln will be leaders within it and no longer outside it. Moreover, the man who asked Lincoln why he was not a member of the church overlooked the fact that the church was in that day abolishing slavery, and in that church Lincoln was

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not only a member, but a High Priest of the whole host.

There are many pathetic stories told about Lincoln; and one of the best concerns a certain young Vermont soldier, William Scott. He was condemned to death for sleeping at his post while on guard. Lincoln visited the camp, and, hearing of it, sent for him and heard his story. He said: "You shall not be shot. Now how am I to be paid for saving your life?" The soldier told him he thought he and his comrades could raise perhaps $500. Lincoln said: "There is only one man in the world who can pay me, and his name is William Scott. If from this day William Scott does his duty so that when he comes to die he can look me in the face and say, I have kept my promise, then I will be paid." Scott became the best soldier in his regiment, and was shot to death on the Peninsula. He said, "Let some one tell the President I have tried to be a good soldier and true to the flag." It seems to

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me Lincoln admitted him into the church that day, the church of the faithful and true to which Lincoln so nobly belonged.

Max Müller pleads for the "bookless religion, which is in the head and the heart, in the sky and the rocks, the rivers and the mountains, the simple, natural, bookless, eternal religion which our age wants more than anything else."

One thing the true church will do—it will tear down the miserable fence that the sham church has erected between the religious and the secular. Mr. Justice Stephens says, "Every act is spiritual, every power is spiritual, whether a man is saying his prayers or buying an estate." Another says, "They are the fruits of the spirit, whether the love is the love of a woman nursing a fretful child, or the long-suffering of a man harassed with the vexing details of business, or the gentleness is that of the doctor following the dark mazes of a fever, or the patience that of a mechanic fitting the joints and valves of an en-

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gine." Taught by the false church the wicked King John ordered that his body was to be wrapt in a monk's cowl and that he was to be buried between Saints Oswald and Wulfstan. What more could be done for him than that? But the common people did not seem to think he was comfortable, for they said, "Hell is a very bad place, but it is much worse since King John went there."

There is a beautiful little book, whose title is worth a good deal more than most books, "The Practise of the Presence of God." It is the record of a monk in the Middle Ages called Brother Lawrence. He was cook for the monastery, and he found God just as near and enjoyed him just as much when he was cooking the dinner for the monks as when he was taking the sacrament. He understood the true nature of religion, and if any cook does not find God in preparing the dinner and in doing it well, then he does not find God in any sacrament.

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James Freeman Clarke writes of that marvelous man, John Wesley: "No man ever went so entirely out of the realm of form and ceremony into that of life as Wesley. His profoundest conviction was this, that no human being lived on earth so bad or so base, so stupid or worldly, but that, if he could believe it, God was ready to kindle in his soul a fire of love which would wholly consume the evil. His business was to make men believe it, and for this faith he lived." It is no wonder that he brought so many outsiders within the fold.

There is unquestionably one great, true church in all the world. It is made up of all the good in every land—simply that. One thing it can not endure, even pretension. The narrow church that insists that it is the only true church is much less the church for its arrogance. The Pharisee who enlarges his phylacteries and widens the borders of his garments is the most likely man to be outside. Poor sailor Jack, who chews and

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smokes and fights and sometimes, alas! swears, but who volunteers to go in that very little boat into the hell of furious raging waters to save the shipwrecked people, he is quite likely to be in the true church. The fireman who murders the King's English, and makes no figure in society, but climbs the ladder and leaps into the smoke that clutches him by the throat, staggers to the bed and lifts up the little babe crying there, follows our dear Lord indeed.

I have always enjoyed this story of the famous showman, P. T. Barnum. He was leading a minister over his "Greatest Show on Earth," and when he was through the circuit the minister thanked him effusively as he shook hands and wished that he might meet him in heaven. Quick as a flash the showman answered, "You will if you get there."

Some one has painted a very suggestive picture that sets forth the householder in the parable giving to every man a penny. A bishop and a

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cardinal and a great Pope look at the penny with much disgust, but an American Indian quite admires it, and a one-legged sailor stumps along, his face wreathed in smiles as he holds the penny in his hand and fairly gloats over it. What immense meaning is in Jesus' words: "Ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God and ye yourselves thrust out, and they shall come from the east and the west and the north and the south and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God. And behold there are last that shall be first and there are first that shall be last."

In short the sham church is full of arrogance and bitterness and pride and cruelty; it is the meanest humbug there is in all the great round world: the true church is full of meekness and gentleness and patience and charity and helpfulness: it is the grandest reality in all the world, and all true men will press into it. Such a church appeals irresistibly to all manly men and noble

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women, and they are in it; but the sham church appeals only to the weaker sort of women and still more weakly men. Every gathering of the true church is like a trumpet-call to every noble endeavor. There has just been held in New York a great Peace Congress with representatives from the whole world. This was a great Church Council, wiser and better than that of Nice. It did not dissect the Godhead, but it planned to save men from the rot and curse and fury and hell of war. And the high Court of The Hague is not only one of the greatest triumphs of our civilization, but one of the noblest parts of the true church. And the life-saving stations all along our shores are true branches of this noble vine and church. And our splendid hospitals all over Christendom, more of them and better equipped than our fathers ever dreamed of, are most beautiful sections of this great church. The devil fairly gnashes his teeth at this noble church, but he loves the cold, dead, narrow,

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pragmatical, sectarian, high and mighty and utterly contemptible sham church and looks upon it as his very chief work. Let us make sure of two things—that we are out of the sham church and in the true church, by laying our hands to the world's great need and the Lord's eternal and soul-satisfying work.

And the most beautiful thing about the true church is that no one is excluded who tries to do his best. The Pope is not shut out, the cardinal and bishops are by no means refused; pillars of churches of all sorts will be let in with the rest if, like the Christ, they go about doing good. But they must all come in *with the rest.* They have no exclusive claims or primogeniture rights. High functionaries of all sorts must not be discouraged—there is room for them too, if they will be meek and come in in a very lowly way. The One who was born in a stable, and had once to borrow a penny, and owned just the coat that covered Him and that the soldiers gambled for

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and who died on the shameful cross and was laid in a borrowed grave, will accept as brethren and sisters all who come meekly and truly and bear his cross of patient love and service. Judson, the great Burma missionary, showed that he understood these things when some one was praising him for his great endurance and he answered, "Many a poor washerwoman has done as much." A Presbyterian minister once told me that, his wife being sick the day before, he had done the washing for the family. He was not much of a preacher and I fancy the good Lord admired his Monday's work more than his Sunday's. His wife probably did also. "He that doeth the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

"The parish priest of austerity
Climbed up in a high church-steeple
To be nearer God so that he might hand
His word down to the people.
And in sermon script he daily wrote
What he thought was sent by heaven,
And he dropt it down on the people's heads

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Two times one day in seven.
In his age God said, 'Come down and die.'
And he cried from out the steeple,
'Where art thou, Lord?' And the Lord replied,
'Down here, among the people.'"

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VII

Rejoice And Be Exceeding Glad

GOD is the greatest, nearest, kindest of all beings; religion is the brightest, gladdest of all things. It is impossible to make these declarations too positively; one can not exaggerate here.

But this is very far from being the common thought. There has been exhibited in New York City an antiquarian curiosity, one of the old morality plays, called "Everyman." It is meant to be a facsimile of the ancient play. As a piece of antiquarianism it is admirable; as an exhibition of religion it is most horrible. But it is true to its original, and sets forth religion as received in the old days. The sad fact is that it is the same sort of religion that is received too largely in the present day. Let me give the plan of the play:

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First Death enters, a most dreadful make-up. In deep sepulchral monotone he makes himself appear as terrible as most people think he is. After he is through declaring how he is to lay waste humanity for time and eternity, Everyman, the subject of the play, appears upon the scene, running in to the stage, with a guitar in his hand, singing a merry tune, keeping step to the music with his dance. He comes with a dash upon the horrible Death, standing in the middle of the stage. Death gives him a good scare, and so thoroughly frightens him that he drops his guitar, and goes on to make himself unspeakably wretched in hope of escaping hell. The whole progress of the play grows darker and darker until Everyman is wrapt in a monk's dress and cowl, and dropt into a most forlorn grave. Then appear angels and suggestions of an extravagant happiness.

Of course this whole thing is a travesty of true religion. But it fairly represents the religious

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ideas of that day; and these ideas have made such a deep impress that they reach even the thought of this time, centuries later.

Everything most dull, wearisome, and forlorn has been associated with religion. A sermon has come to be synonymous with all that is soporific. In the olden times they were accustomed to take the collection in a velvet bag and to the end of the bag was attached a bell, to waken the sleepers.

A witty poet has put into verse the common thought of the dulness of churches. He represents different objects in nature wondering at the going of the people to church as follows:

Said Grass, "What is that sound
So dismally profound,
  That detonates and desolates the air?"
"That is St. Peter's bell,"
Said rain-wise Pimpernel;
"He is music to the godly,
Tho to us he sounds so oddly,
  And he terrifies the faithful unto prayer."
Said Grass, "And whither track
These creatures all in black,

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So wobegone, and penitent and meek?"
"They're mortals bound for church,"
Said the little Silver Birch;
"They hope to get to heaven
And to have their sins forgiven,
If they talk to God about it once a week."
Said Grass, "What is that noise
That startles and destroys
Our blessed summer brooding when we're tired?"
"That's folks a-praising God,"
Said the tough old Cynic Clod;
"They do it every Sunday,
They'll be all right on Monday,
It's just a little habit they've acquired."

The idea that the religious life is one of sadness, while the life of sin is one of happiness in any sense of the words, is simply an outrage on all common sense. The one miserable thing on earth is wrong-doing everywhere and always, and any man will surely find it so who tries that wretched way. Madame de Remusat tells us that Napoleon used to say life was bright at first, but veil after veil dropt as we went on, till all was blackness itself. I have no doubt he spoke truly his own experience; for he lived an utterly self-

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ish life, and in this there is no escape from darkness. And when Byron wrote:

> "My days are in the yellow leaf,
> The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
> The worm, the canker and the grief
> Are mine alone,"

he wrote the true results of his ill-regulated life.

Happiness wants cultivation; there is a habit of being happy and a habit of being miserable, and we want to cultivate the first. I would bring this indictment against religious people, that there has been far too much cultivation of misery. I knew one very pious woman who would never have her piano opened on Sunday. I would rather throw the lid of the piano back against the wall on Sunday. This woman also did not light her hall gas-jet on Sunday. I should light two for one on that day.

The whole subject of popular amusement comes in here and merits the most careful consideration.

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Take the drama, for instance. The drama is one of the most beautiful rests and refreshments of man that have ever been provided. It has always been one of the chief instructors of the world, but it has suffered greatly from the modern opposition of good people. We have been quite indiscriminate in our condemnation of the theater. What would be thought of him who would condemn all books because so many books are bad? Bad books have done more harm than bad dramas, because there are so many more of them and they are so much more used. But we never think of attacking books. We cultivate in our young people the habit of reading. There are noble plays that stir every high emotion of the soul. Mr. Booth tried in New York a high-class theater, but it failed because the good people who had been crying out against the bad theater never went near his good theater. Let us understand that we can never crush out from the human heart the love of the drama; it is instinctive and

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ineradicable. It can not be destroyed, because it ought not to be destroyed. It is one of God's great teachers of the race. The one who sees Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep, trying to wash out the blood-spot, and saying, "Who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" will have an idea of remorse that he would not get from a sermon. And as we rely upon the good books to kill out the bad ones, so we should use the good plays to stamp out the bad ones. For so long as men are as God made them, they will go to see tragedies and comedies. The church must cultivate legitimate pleasures, rebuke illegitimate pleasures, and enforce a life of faithful labor, which only can enjoy pleasure at any time; labor being the blest law of our life, legitimate pleasure its recreation and refreshment.

Good people must take special pains to give no valid ground for the complaint of the poet William Blake:

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"I went to the garden of love,
And I saw what I never had seen;
A chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

"And the gate of this chapel was shut,
And 'Thou shalt not' writ over the door;
So I turned to the garden of love,
That so many sweet flowers bore;

"And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tombstones where flowers should be;
And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds
And binding with briers my joys and desires."

There is a gentleman who has given much time and labor to helping the poorer classes. He gathers them by the thousands in great halls for mutual improvement, and the thousands never fail to come at his call. I heard him close an address upon the subject of his work, with a vision which he had often imagined. It was of a magnificent building fitted up with everything that could be desired for innocent and helpful amusement—music, pictures, lectures, games, athletics, all of the very best quality, and thronged

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by the laboring millions. He spoke of the great and valuable work that Mr. Carnegie has done for the supply of libraries and reading, but he remarked that he thought a building of this sort was more needed by the laboring people than even libraries. For they were very tired after the work of the day; rest and refreshment were what they called for, and, alas, they often found them only in dissipation or perhaps vice. If such buildings, of a really fine character, could be scattered over the city, they would do incalculable good, and make a vast inroad upon vice and crime. "Thou shalt not" has had too large a place in our methods; "Come and welcome" would accomplish wonders. Perhaps Mr. Carnegie himself may be drawn to such a work as this. I went to the People's Palace in London, and found in it an organ recital, a loan picture-gallery with some of the chief works of art in England, pictures known round the world, a public concert, bowling-alleys and billiard-tables, all for one

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English penny, and the place filled with people. This seems the very spirit of Jesus of Nazareth, and his parable of the good Samaritan. When the world is made good, it will be found that despised amusement has done a full share of the work.

Returning to our general theme, it may be said that we give way far too much to anxious and troubled thoughts. A good old man once said to me, "My dear sir, I have suffered most in my life from things that never happened." So have we all of us. It is said that a traveler in the old days was taking the common journey to the West. For some days he wondered how he would get over a certain broad river before him. He found that the river was frozen over, and was glad to hear it. He started forth on the ice, but when he reached the middle of the wide expanse his courage failed him and he became quite demoralized. What if the ice should break beneath him in the very middle of the stream! He lost his strength

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and could hardly put one foot before another. He actually threw himself upon the ice and began knocking with his clenched fist as he crawled to test its firmness. While so engaged he heard the tinkle of bells, and saw a team of horses with a sleigh run upon the ice at the edge of the river before him. He sprang to his feet, and, as the sleigh jingled past him, saw that it had a ton of pig-iron upon it. In a universe of God's love, our fears are like this.

We are almost dying of solemnity. Occasional solemnity is a good thing, but it can not compare with joy as a moving power in the hearts of men. We have the best news in the world, and we often tell it in the worst way. The pulpit tone, so called, is a mournful tone; away with it! The prayer voice is a sad voice; brighten it! One who has been used to the full joy of religion, coming into many religious meetings, would be inclined to ask his neighbor, "Friend, whose funeral is this?" Religious meetings must remain small so

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long as the minor scale is indulged in. Men who know, do not try to catch fish with pebbles; they choose the most attractive bait. They recognize the judgment of fishes; let us recognize the judgment of men. I fancy if a religious meeting were what it might be, what it has a right to be, people would come crowding to the door, and as they looked over the heads of the audience would cry, "Can not I get in? is there not room for one more?" That day is coming, and we are the people who keep it from coming. True religion is meant for men who love to be happy; and it is the one thing that will make them so. St. Francis of Assisi said to one of his followers: "Repent before God in secret, but before me and others be cheerful; for it does not become a servant of God to have an air of melancholy and a face full of trouble."

We would not deny that there is very much of religion in the world, but we want a great deal more of it than we have ever had. We deal it

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out too stingily, as they do food in mean hostelries. It was at one of these that a disgusted guest, when the piece of apple-pie was brought, took out his glasses and scrutinizing it carefully said, as if it were a sample: "Yes, that is what I want; bring me some of that." So the good God says of our religion. We have the sample of religion and as yet we have little more. Sellers come to merchants with a little wheat in their hand; they have great elevators full of it to sell. Or they bring a little wedge of steel; they have car-loads of it to sell. Just so we have a sample of religion, but we want the great mass and sum of it. And we shall have them one day. It will all be very easy work then. But now some one has said, "When I think of a baseball game, the church seems like an ice-house."

Let us understand that animation and enthusiasm are natural to us, but we kill them by our cold ways. Baxter says that some good people could kiss a live coal to ice. We have to practise

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before we can come to that. See the vivacity of childhood. We are sitting gravely in our parlor, with company manners upon us, when to the relief of all a burst of children enters the room, with peal upon peal of laughter. Some proper person says, "Hush!" but many of us feel that we should like to inject a good deal of that merriment into mature life. I was once crossing Central Park in New York on one of the most forlorn of old-fashioned horse-cars. There was a children's picnic in the park, and the children crowded to the edge of the road, and gave us cheer upon cheer, with perfect abandon. If we had been General Grant after Richmond, or Admiral Dewey after Manila, we could hardly have had a more enthusiastic ovation than was given us in that old horse-car. I wished that this rapture could spread over the rest of life—that we were all taught to be more exuberant; it would not harm us, no heart knows how it would help us. Here again, unless we

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become like children we can not *see* the kingdom of heaven.

This is no new thing that I am pleading for. In the old Jewish state there was a great deal of religious joy. One of their chief occasions was the feast of tabernacles, called also the feast of ingathering because observed at the time of harvest. The people dwelt in booths to remind them of the days in tents of the desert. There were two special observances; the first was the pouring out of water. The water was brought from the pool of Siloam and was poured out with great rejoicings in the temple; probably a reminder of the gift of water from the rock in the desert. In the evening of the same day two lofty stands were erected, each supporting four great lamps which shed their light over the whole city. The people engaged in singing and dancing, and it was a saying of the Jews that he who had not seen the joy of the pouring out of the water had never seen joy in his life. It will be remembered,

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too, how the disciples were gathered in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, and the Holy Ghost came mightily upon them, so that the people came thronging to the place to see the wondrous scene. At first they thought that these men were drunken, for Peter explains that they are not, but that they are filled with the Spirit. I venture to say that it is not common for this mistake to be made, or that people would think we were drunken at a religious meeting. We have not enough of the Holy Ghost for that. We are always the pink of propriety; we are far too proper, too little joyful. We are less enthused and inspiring in our religious meetings than at any other time. In politics there is much enthusiasm, in a boat-race more, in a church service there is usually none; and we shall never have much power till the enthusiasm of joy has come and filled us.

There is another exhibition of the joy of the early Christians, and strangely enough it is in connection with their *graves*. Beneath Rome

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lie the catacombs, the tombs of the primitive Christians. One who made a study of the catacombs gives his thought in this pregnant sentence: "There you find miles upon miles of graves and not one word of gloom." We clothe ourselves in the deepest sables, and our funerals are often monstrosities of wo. It will be remembered that Mr. Beecher forbade every manifestation of mourning at his own funeral, and that it was conducted with that charge carefully observed. It was a revelation and a preaching of the gospel of victory over death to every one who participated. Dr. Parker of London left the same charge as to his funeral. Tennyson wrote of his mother's funeral: "We all of us hate the pompous funeral we have to join in—black plumes, black coaches and nonsense. We should all like to go in white and gold rather, but convention is against us." The gorge of the enlightened Christian, who believes in God and immortality, rises against the ordinary undertaker's performances.

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I fancy the Hallelujah Chorus could have been played at Mr. Beecher's funeral with the greatest propriety. Yes, we would have the joy break even into the death and the funeral, break everywhere, as the sunrise breaks over all the earth.

Religious joy should be by far the greatest and highest because it is the joy that may be for everybody. It is undeniable that the wider the joy, the greater it is. Let us fully understand that religion is good tidings of great joy which shall be *to all people*. We continually limit it, but the result is that we lose the joy ourselves. It is an absolute impossibility for a strong sectarian to get much of the joy. There is no room for it in his pigmy heart. Just as a man casts out his brother, he casts out the joy. This is one reason why we may hope for a wider, deeper joy to-day; because exclusion is yielding to inclusion, narrowness to love. It is a general principle of our being, and how fine a thing it is, that the wider

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our sympathies spread, the richer our enjoyment becomes. There is something inexpressibly grand about the enthusiastic joy of a vast multitude. One of our soldiers, Captain Ricks, tells us how he carried the news of the surrender of Lee to an army corps. He heard the news, mounted a horse and started along the road where the men were resting on the march and eating the midday meal. He could be seen for a long distance along the line, and he went at full gallop, crying, "Lee has surrendered, Lee has surrendered!" One great shout followed him all the way, a tumult of delight. And when he came where the General was with his aides, the Commander leapt into the middle of the road, and, hardly knowing what he was about, turned a somersault before the whole corps, at which the men just went wild with delight. It was the combined joy that made it so great—it spread from heart to heart till it became like a wide-rolling ocean. Who then can conceive the joy of a whole

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world, when it has once received the infinite love of God?

There is one way in which we can all help the coming of this great joy, even by believing that it is coming. Every one who doubts, delays; every one who believes, hastens a world full of joy. And it is as sure as anything can be that the joy is coming. The truth and love and power of God are pledged to it. The God of the mountain and the ocean, of the sunset and the cataract will not fail in his highest work in *men*. Human character will be the great glory and wonder of the world. What it will be, the life and character of our Savior show us. There is the purpose of God. And at the very summit of this character will be supreme joy. God loves happiness; it is for the joy that is set before Him, He does His mighty works. We can lose ourselves for a moment in the thought, how ecstatic will be the universal delight when God has wrought His full pleasure with the world and made it full of joy and love.

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One of the most pathetic things is to see the weary and disheartened way in which the best people often do the best work. Whether it is a prayer-meeting or a church fair, it is gone about as if not much would come of it. And often very little does come. When we think of the millions spent for what is called pleasure, most tiresome and disappointing pleasure, how slowly often the pennies come in for the benevolent fund. But this matter of joy will make all the difference. When the hearts get full, the gifts will be full. It is the fun of it that makes the football field so crowded. And there is more downright fun in religion than in all other things put together. The love of God is the *summum bonum* of the human heart, and nothing else can be, or can approach it. The love of God is the great undiscovered secret of the world. Sometimes in a religious service when I have felt even a little of what I might have felt, I have wished that I could have the grandest orchestra of the whole world

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with every instrument of music that was ever known, strained to its highest pitch and power to set forth the majestic grandeur and delight of religious truth. If I had all these, and they would not be too many, for I should have wished for the orchestras of all the worlds, and if I had all these, I do not fancy that I should have any difficulty in finding an audience, or need to make great advertisement to draw all the world; the joy would advertise itself. Nothing ever advertises itself as does joy. You would need to have the reserved seats for the Church more than for the opera. The little boy in a fashionable church said that the ushers in his church were to show the people where they must *not* sit. How the small boy does get succinctly at the true inwardness of things! The ushers in a real church are to show the people where they are gladly welcome to sit. But there is a third use of ushers for that great coming day of joy, even to show the people *out of* the churches. Benediction has been pro-

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nounced, service is ended, but nobody moves; why should they? To what place can they go that will be as good as this? No, no, they know when they are well off. Like the famous French General after the taking of the Malakoff, they say, "Here I am, and here I stay." Then the minister tells them that they have been in the service three hours, that it is absolutely necessary to ventilate the church and to rest for a while, but if they will withdraw now, another service will be arranged for them as soon as is best. But this is quite ineffectual; so he calls upon his ushers to come forward and kindly lead these eager people out of the door, and at last with much hard persuasion the congregation is dismissed, to find in the fresh air and the sunshine the same dear love of God. Then in good season before Thanksgiving-day, the football men will come to the minister and say, "We want to know at what time you are to have your services, so that they may not interfere with our game.

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For if your bell should ring in the middle of the game, there would not be a soul left to finish the thing. So please give us your hour, and do not change it, for we want a game." And what a very sensible state of affairs it is, when God and heaven are really believed to be better than a game; and all will enjoy the games too, better than ever before, and be more courteous in them.

At the top of Wall Street in New York stands Trinity Church. Beneath its beautiful spire rush and hurry the crowds of eager men. Money is their god and he breaks their hearts. There is a little touch of the coming glory when a noon service is held in Trinity, and men crowd it in the busiest day to hear the word of God from Phillips Brooks, or another prophet of the Lord. But in that day it will be a constant feature. Trinity Church is fine as a protest to-day; it will be a triumphant rapture then. As often as its doors are opened will it be crowded, and at the close of the service the preacher will say: "Now,

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brethren, you must go down to your stocks and bonds; railroads must run, telegraphs must flash, corner lots must be sold. You must not forget the importance of money, and keeping it as you do, not above but below, it will do a fine service. The congregation is dismissed, and you must go, but we shall have you back very soon again, that we promise you." And what merry faces will go thronging out to see that they do their neighbor no wrong in the buying of a railroad or the selling of a *horse!*

Know all men, God's infinite love and joy are calling you. Depths of unimagined rapture are awaiting you. Heaven's joy and glory press all around the earth, and very near, but we are holding them off. In God's dear name let the joy come, all we can hold of it, all that God can send of it, let Him strain His omnipotence as He will. How profoundly happy will God be then! and we, all human language fails to tell of that.

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"For behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

In summing up the whole subject we may say that as the old theology is the most terrible system of thought that man has ever devised, so the new theology is the most beautiful and enrapturing. The result of the change from the one to the other must be such an overturning as the world has never seen before, and in one great direction, the direction of happiness. We have erred in many respects, but in none more greatly than in our misery. We have fallen absolutely away from our rightful bliss. We have never been as happy as God wants us to be. The old theology led men down to the depths of wretchedness, the new will lead them up to the heights of bliss.

The present state of things is built upon the basis of great happiness, if we would but acknowledge it. Wallace, the naturalist, asserts that "the popular idea of the struggle for existence entailing misery is the very reverse of the

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truth; it is very difficult even to imagine a system by which a greater balance of happiness could be secured." Of the lower orders of creatures he says: "They have almost perfect enjoyment of their life—they enjoy all the happiness of which they are capable. The present condition of things brings about the maximum of life and the enjoyment of life with the minimum of suffering and pain." Stanley, when he found Livingstone, writes of him: "Under the wayworn exterior lay a fund of high spirits and inexhaustible humor. Every day I heard innumerable jokes and pleasant anecdotes. At first I was not sure but that this joviality and abundant animal spirits would pass, but as I found they continued while I was with him, I was obliged to think them natural." And, by the way, this very thing turned Stanley from a skeptic to a believer. The joy of Livingstone was the converting power to Stanley, illustrating the magnificent and fundamental truth that the joy of

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the true church will be the salvation of the world. When we have gotten rid of our abominable and stupid melancholy we shall win the world to God, and never till then. The merry spirit of Livingstone was based upon his deepest convictions. In the heart of Africa he writes: "Here there are invisible myriads of insect life all brimful of enjoyment, working with never-tiring mandible on leaves and stalks and beneath the soil. Indeed, the universality of organic life seems like a mantle of happy existence encircling the world and betokening the presence of our benignant Father's smile on the works of his hand." This suggests to us the pleasing thought that at the one extreme there is the hum of all the little insects in the whole world, which is a hymn of praise to the good God, and at the other there is the rapturous song of all the angels and saints of God, and, when things become right, all the way between these two extremes will be found the same hymn of joy and praise.

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We go along through bad education and foolish ways of living, in a very poor kind of minor tone at the best, but we do not know ourselves. There comes a time when we are carried away beyond ourselves into a sheer delirium of joy. We laugh, we sing, we cry with delight. Every one of us has known this experience. And this is a revelation to ourselves of our own capacity of happiness. An apostle writes, "Tho now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." These are very strong terms, but they are true. Yet how seldom do we rejoice thus! We have been toned down, we have been saddened, our lives have been darkened by our religious teachings, and it will take time to break away from our grave-clothes to life and joy and rapture. This happiness is extremely necessary. It is perhaps the great need of the church to-day. There is a confest powerlessness. It was pathetic to see a deputation of ministers sent from New York to ask

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President Roosevelt to help the churches. President Roosevelt is an admirable gentleman, but we shall have to look higher. I sometimes fear religion may be dying of solemnity. Look in our churches. What an oppressive solemnity! Would it not be well to act as if God were good, and heaven near, and life glorious? Would it not be good to smile a bit, and beam on a neighbor instead of folding the arms and looking severely at the carpet? One feels sometimes like lifting his head and shouting by way of protest. The joy of the Lord is our strength. One of the first things to be done is completely to demolish the old theology and leave not one stone upon another. God is good enough in himself—life is fine enough in itself—the world is beautiful enough in itself, but the old theology has maligned and darkened them all. It has the strange capacity of extracting all the joy from everything. A young Scotchman of my acquaintance lighted upon his first watermelon and had to serve it to

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the company at table. He had seen musk-melons, so he politely cut out and laid to one side the juicy heart, and gravely served the rind to the astonished guests. We have been doing just that for some centuries in our churches. It is time now to stop, and let the people know how good God is—

> "How good is man's life, the mere living,
> How fit to employ
> All the heart and the soul and the senses
> Forever in joy!"

Tear down the sackcloth, scatter the ashes, throw away the crape and habiliments of mourning, and let joy have a little room, and then more room, till joy shall be unconfined, and the songs and laughter of God's sons and daughters take the place of tears and lamentations. It will be found at last that the man who has believed the most, hoped the most, and rejoiced the most was supremely right. God is not the great sexton, and life is not the great funeral, but God is

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the great and ever blest God, and life is his banqueting-house where his banner over us is Love. I believe that there is a vast company of people who stand ready to accept this religion of Love and Light and boundless Hope instead of the miserable substitute that the old theology has been so long offering them. I believe all things are trembling on the point of a great enthusiasm and outbreak for God and religion and the true spiritual life of every-day goodness, kindness and service, the love of God and the love of the neighbor. With enthusiasm men will fall back on these two great commandments of Jesus, in place of the monstrous and horrible and baseless notions of the old theology. I am looking for such a day of humble piety and honest gladness as the world has never seen before, and I am with every man of every land and every creed who wants to bring that good day. As sure as God lives it is coming, and coming fast.

We must insist, then, with the utmost empha-

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sis that religion is in no way to be confounded with the terrible dogmas of the old theology. They form no part of its beautiful essence, they have been only a miserable incubus upon its history, a sad legacy from the dark ages. It is one of the marvels of history that the scholastic theology, the most dreadful of all parasites, should have attached itself to the life of Jesus, the most beautiful of all lives.

True religion does not teach that man is reprobate, set against all that is good, determined on all evil, abiding under the wrath and curse of God. This is not a ruined world; it is a most beautiful world, and both its majesty and its beauty draw the hearts of men to God. There has been no terrible cataclysm dashing into God's exquisite labor, but steadily from the darkness to the light, from the beast to the angel, has moved the race destined to bear the glorious image of God.

The human heart springs up with a bound

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when delivered from its long thraldom. We look up to a most beautiful God whom with full heart we can call Father. In his hands we lie with the most perfect joy and hope. We look round upon a most beautiful world in which God is doing his grandest works. Nature has an exquisite loveliness, and it is not all marred by a terrible curse. The trail of the serpent is not over it all. Righteousness reigns; goodness prevails; all is moving forward by the omnipotence of God to the better. On the highest level all is supremely well. Optimism is the only possible creed. A most kind and omnipotent God necessitates a result beyond our highest thought or hope. The watchers of all worlds may cry, "All is well." The future is radiant with hope. Wrong will be met and defeated at every point. God will gain his great victory, the acknowledgment that He is right and sin is wrong. The self-evident glory and loveliness of truth and goodness will shine through the whole creation

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